

A
S E R M O N

Occasion'd by the

D E A T H

Of the R E V E R E N D

Mr. *Samuel Bourn,*

O F

B O L T O N.

Who Died the 4th of *March* 1719, in the
72d Year of his Age.

By his Son

S A M U E L B O U R N.

Unum oro; ———

Ire ad Conspectum chari Genitoris, & ora

Contingat. ——— ———

Virg. Æn. L. 6.

L O N D O N:

Printed, and Sold by J. CLARK, at the *Bible* in
the *Poultry*; and E. MATTHEWS, at the *Bible*
in *Pater-noster-Row*. 1721.

MON

Continued by the

DEATH

OF THE REVISED

Mr. Samuel Bowin

OF A T O M

Who Died the 11th of March 1799, in the
70th Year of his Age

SAMUEL BOWIN

W O R D S

in which are contained
the last words of the
deceased



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2 KINGS ii. 3.

And the Prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him; Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy Master from thy Head to Day? And he said, Yea I know it, hold you your Peace.



Y Appearance amongst you this Day will cause, I'm afraid, a general Uneasiness, as 'twill revive in every Mind the Image of my blessed *Father*, and fill the Breasts of this Assembly with new Confusions.

Nor had I come here so soon, but that the same Providence, which has remov'd *my Father*, did, a little before, remove one of his Charge out of this into the other World; whose Funeral I am desir'd to commemorate in a Discourse suited to that Occasion, which is to be the Work of the Afternoon. I shall therefore spend this Part of the Day in paying a small Part of the Acknowledgements I owe to the Memory of *my Father*, and at the same Time endeavour to assist you in the Reflections you

ought to make on such an Event, and in the Improvement which the Author of that Event expects from a People so deeply concern'd in it, and left so naked by it: For how great soever the Infelicity of his Family is by such a Stroke, I can't but look on yours to be at least equally great.

What Things I propose to deliver upon this Occasion, shall be from a Text that will give me Room to lay before you all that I have Time for.

2 Kings ii. 3. *And the Prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him; Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy Master from thy Head to Day? And he said, Yea I know it, hold you your Peace.*

The same Question was put to *Elisha* by the Sons of the Prophets at *Jericho*, v. 5. They came to *Elisha*, and said, *Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy Master from thy Head to Day?* And he return'd 'em the same Answer: *Yea I know it, hold you your Peace.*

When the Time was come that the old Prophet *Elijah* must finish his Ministrations and go up to God; In order to try the Faithfulness and Constancy of *Elisha*, or that he might enflame his Desires and Love, he urg'd him to stay at *Gilgal*, while he perform'd an Embassy at *Bethel*. But *Elisha* wou'd not leave him; he wou'd enjoy *Elijah's* Company while on Earth, and was resolv'd to be a Witness, if he might, of the Manner of his Departure to Heaven, which either from the *Spirit*, or from *Elijah's* own Mouth had been signified to be near.

Accordingly he accompanied *Elijah*, whose last Work was to visit the *Schools of the Prophets*, that he might leave with 'em his Blessing, and Spirit, counsel and animate the young Men there in their Preparatory Studies. He went first to the School at *Bethel*, then to that at *Jericho*.

Note, Those who are young, who are intending for, or newly enter'd into the Work of the Ministry greatly

greatly need the Prayers, Advice and Presence of aged Ministers. They are Life and Spirit to us. Our Hands are weak, and our Hearts fail, when they go from us.

Both these Places, *Bethel* and *Jericho* were subject to the Kings of *Israel*, who supported *Jeroboam's* Idolatry, who had set up an Idol in the former of these Places, *1 Kings* xii. 29. which was therefore call'd *Beth-Aven*, *Hos.* iv. 15. Idolatry turns *BETHEL*, the *House of God*, into *BETH-AVEN*, the *House of Vanity and Iniquity*. Yet these Schools were tolerated.

Note, While Schools are uncorrupted, and fill'd with sober and pious Youths, whose prevailing Concern it is to prepare for future Usefulness, they may look for the singular Protection of God's Providence.

Observe farther, That faithful old Ministers have a tender Affection for young Ministers and Students. They look upon them as their Successors in a glorious Ministry, who must stand up in their Room. As the Priesthood under the *first Covenant*, was successive, the Priests not being suffer'd to continue by Reason of Death; so the Gospel-Ministry passes thro' many Hands. Dying Ministers earnestly desire their Successors may be furnished with Knowledge, and Zeal, and Prudence, that they may *shine* and *burn*, and execute their great Office with Faithfulness to *Christ* and Souls. They are desirous to leave with 'em their *dying Counsels*, and *dying Charges*.

The Scholars at both these *Colleges* had Notice of *Elijah's* Departure, and look upon this as the last Visit he wou'd make 'em; and apprehending that *Elisha* wou'd be most deeply affected with this Stroke, at both Places, they address their Discourse to him, and ask him the Question in the Text: *Knowest thou that the Lord, &c.*

In order to explain this Passage, observe

First, That the young Men intended for the Work of the Ministry are called the *Sons of the Prophets*, i. e. their *Disciples* or *Scholars*. For Masters and Tutors ought to be so many Fathers to their Pupils in Affection and Care. *Elisha* calls *Elijah* his Father, v. 12,

Secondly, When they say, *This Day*, they mean *shortly*, for the Journey of *Elijah* and *Elisha* from *Jordan* thro' *Bethel* and *Jericho* to *Jordan* again, with their Staying to do Good by the Way, wou'd take them up probably more than one Day.

Thirdly, In that Expression, *from thy Head*, they seem to allude to the Way of Schools, where the Masters sat in a higher Place, all his Scholars sitting below at his Feet, *Acts* xxii. 3.

Or, the Expression may import thus much, "Thy Master is to thee what a Crown, or other Ornament is to the Head, so that when thou lovest thy Master, thou shalt lose thy Crown and thy Glory." An antient faithful Minister is the Ornament and Glory of an Assembly, and when such an one dieth, their Glory is laid in the Dust.

Or, the Head may be put for *the Man*, "Knowest thou that the Lord will this Day take away thy Head, or take from thee thy Master, who is thy Head, and thou be left as a Body without a Head?" The Removal of such a Minister as *Elijah* is the Beheading of a Society, the whole Body languishes.

Or, *from thy Head*, may signify only *from thy Presence*, from before thy Face, that thou shalt see and converse with him no longer. The Time will come when a People shall see their Ministers no more; they shall sit under their Instructions, and receive their Visits in their Families no more.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Elisha's Answer was, Hold your Peace. Silence becomes great and mysterious Providences. He was probably afraid lest *Elijah* shou'd be suddenly taken from him, and he was unwilling to have his Mind or Eyes diverted. He was too Thoughtful and Concern'd to be talk'd with, therefore he bids 'em hold their Peace.

The whole Sense of both the Question and the Answer, and the Lesson of Truth and Duty they teach us, may be represented in these *five Propositions*.

I. Aged faithful Ministers are, during their Life and Ministry, to their People, and to younger Ministers a dear and valuable Head.

II. The Time is coming when God will remove his aged Ministers from their Charges.

III. When faithful aged Ministers are remov'd by Death, they are taken from the Head of their Charges, and all who have been under their Care ought to look on themselves as depriv'd of their Head.

IV. 'Tis proper and may be useful for a People, and for younger Ministers, the Sons of the Prophets, to be before-hand thinking and discoursing on the Removal of aged Ministers from their Head.

V. Some Providences are so dark and cloudy, particularly the Removal of faithful Ministers by Death, that those who are most concern'd in them, care not to talk of 'em, but rather choose to sit down and think them over.

Tho' *Elijah* was remov'd by the Translation of his *whole Man* to Heaven, I substitute *Death* in the Place

Place of such a Translation, in Regard this is the Way by which God's Ministers leave this World and go up to him.

I. Aged faithful Ministers, are, during their Life and Ministry, to their People, and to their younger Brethren, a dear and valuable Head.

Such a Head was *Elijah* to *Israel*, and to the *Sons* of the *Prophets*.

Such a Head was *my Father* to this Assembly, and to the younger Ministers within his Reach, very dear and very valuable to all. Both you and they have oft sat under his Ministry with great Delight, and his Sermons and his Prayers have been pleasant, very pleasant to our Taste.

The last Opportunity I ever had to hear him preach was at *Kendal*, from Psalm xcvi. 11. *Light is sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the Upright in Heart.* In that Discourse, he describ'd, in the most lively Manner, the blessed Harvest of Light and Joy, as a Motive to that moral Righteousness, and Integrity of Soul, which he shew'd were the *Qualifications* which intitle to a Share in those Harvests,

To be more particular,

1. Faithful aged Ministers are to their People, and to younger Ministers, *Heads* of *Life* and *Motion*. As the *Nerves* are Originated in the Brain, and convey thence fresh animal Spirits, or a nervous Fluid, by which Life and Sense and Motion are preserv'd and perform'd in all Parts of the Body; so this great Office of a natural Head to the Members is perform'd in a better Sense by faithful Ministers to the Members of the Society whereof they are *Heads*, and to the Members of the *Class* to which they belong. They are employ'd by *Jesus Christ*, the Author of Nature and Grace, to inspire Life and Motion into 'em all.

Elijah

Elijah, while in the World, was the Life and Light of *Israel*, their Comfort and their Joy. *My Father* has been long so to you: I am persuaded many a dead Sinner has been brought to Life by him; that many who are now alive unto God, owe their new Life to the Force of his Ministry, render'd successful by a still more excellent Power.

Many a *good Work* has been either begun or encouraged by him, and I believe none of that Name ever stopp'd at his Door.

My Brethren in the Ministry will say, He gave Life and Spirit as well as Light to their Conversation: That his Affability and Facetiousness mixt with Gravity made him very pleasant to 'em all; and his Propriety in expressing Himself in Discourse, in Preaching, and in Prayer, was what few came up to.

I may add, there was a peculiar Vivacity in his Spirit and Expression, tho' not at all times equal; and this accompanied him to the last; which may be urg'd as an Argument for the Immortality of the Soul, and its Independance on the Body, as to its Existence and Intellectual Operations.

Once during his Illness, when he reviv'd a little and sat up, he said to those about him, "Now I think I shall trouble the World a while longer". I mention this only for the Vivacity of the Thought.

I may further add, that his Prayers were wonderfully fitted to inspire Devotion into his Hearers. It was not easy to hear him pray without Admiration and Concern. His Ardours were catching.

2. Aged Faithful Ministers are *Heads of Union* to their People, and in some Respects to their younger Brethren.

As our Union with the *Catholick Church* consists in an *Adhesion* to *Jesus Christ* as universal Head; and to all true Christians as Fellow-Members; which Union is form'd by the Communication of the Spirit on Christ's Part, and by Faith exercis'd on all proper

proper Objects, Love and Obedience on the Part of Christians : So the Union of a *Particular* Church consists in an *Adhesion* to their *Pastor*, and to the several Members of the Society taught and ruled by him in full Subordination to Christ.

Union with the *Pastor* lies in a due internal Reverence, Respect, and Love as to his Person, and an Obediential Regard to his Ministry, while he acts in Pursuance of his Commission ; and in an external Attendance on his Ministrations, with a stated receiving from him the Seals of the Covenant ; and in paying upon all Occasions a just Deference in Words and Actions, not only what is due to his Personal Improvements in Knowledge and Goodness, but what is owing to his *Relative Capacity*, he being related to Jesus Christ as his Minister and Agent, and to his People as *their Head* and Servant for Jesus's Sake.

When Faithfulness and Age meet together in a Minister, they ought to be, and often are both Reasons and Motives of Union to their People. They tend to draw a Society's Eyes and Hearts upon him as their Head and Center. Thus were the Eyes of *Israel* fixt on *Elijah* first, and then on *Elisha*.

The venerable Age of *your Pastor*, and his unexceptionable Faithfulness have render'd him a real Head of Union to his Charge ; nor have you, during his standing over you, had any Temptation to break Church Union, nor are you chargeable with it.

But a Man's being plac'd as Head of a People, without Capacity and Fidelity to support the Character and execute the Office, will not always be a *Successful Means* of Peace and Union in particular Churches.

Therefore it highly concerns a People, who want a Minister, to make Choice of one, to whom all, if possible, may submit, and in whom, as their Head, they may cheerfully unite, and against whom no ma-

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terial Exceptions lye. And those who upon any private Respects relinquish their Right of insisting upon Ministerial Abilities, and Faithfulness, and a suitable Temper in the Man who is to minister amongst 'em in holy Things, they give up Christ's Honour and Interest, and the Interest of their own Souls and the Souls of others. Where an ill Choice is made, the Glory of a Church will soon burn dim.

3. Aged Faithful Ministers are an informing, communicating Head. As their Hearers unite in them, so they minister Light and Knowledge to their Hearers.

Such a Head was *Elijah*, he left not off communicating to the World about him, and to the Prophets rising up after him, till he was withdrawn from them.

Such a Head was *my Father* to you, a Communicating Head, and I need not tell you he had something to communicate. He had been a close Student and Reader, which enabled him to lay in a vast Stock. He never knew what it was to be lazy; if he was intemperate any Way, it was in studying, for in that he was indefatigable. And he had a wonderful Art of extracting the Spirit of an Author, and transferring it into his own Discourses with Advantage, so that neither others, nor perhaps himself always took notice of it, in Regard it might justly be call'd his own, before he deliver'd it as such.

And sure we are, he laid out his Stock as liberally, as he had faithfully laid it up. As a *Messenger of the Lord of Hosts* did his *Lips keep Knowledge*, and 'twas not in vain that his People *sought the Law at his Mouth*, Mal. ii. 7. There was a Fulness and Variety in his publick Performances that were amazing, and which, if I mistake not, had these two Causes. The *vast Treasure* of Knowledge he had laid up; And his *rich Invention*; which, when he *sat down to his Work* enlarged his Views, and furnish'd him with
lively

lively Images and most apt Similitudes, which had something that surpriz'd, and which he never pursu'd too far.

Nor need you be told he *sat down to Work* for every Sermon he Preach'd, he did not put you off with jejune or trifling Ministrations, with unfurnish'd Discourses; they always smell'd of the Lamp.

As he took uncommon Pains in *preparing* what he was to deliver, so also in *delivering* what he had prepar'd. And tho' he never spar'd his Voice, yet it remain'd clear and strong while he had any Occasion for it.

Moreover, he deliver'd the great Truths of Jesus Christ in a Charming Manner, both as to his Language and his *Action**.

His Grimaces, which were somewhat peculiar in Prayer, tho' wholly unaffected, might perhaps be disagreeable to Strangers: But his Gestures in Preaching were very becoming an Orator; there was a Mixture

* Est enim *Actio* quasi Corporis quædam Eloquentia, cum consistet è *Voce* atq; *Motu*, Cic. de Orat. p. m. 349.

Affectus omnes languescant necesse est, nisi voce, vultu, totius propè habitu corporis inardescant, Quint. Instit. L. 11. c. 3.

Si Gestus ac vultus ab Oratione dissentiant, tristitia dicamus hilares, affirmemus aliqua renuentes, non autoritas modò verbis, sed etiam fides desit. ib.

Ἐπειδὴ ἂν γὰρ ὁ λόγος ἀποτερνῇ τὸ τε δέξις τῷ λέγοντος, καὶ τὸ φωνῆς, καὶ τὸ μεταβολῶν τὸ ἐν ταῖς ῥητορείαις γινόμενων, ἔτι δὲ καὶ τῶν χειρῶν, καὶ τῆς σκεδῆς τὸ περὶ τὴν πρῶτην, καὶ μηδὲν ἢ τὸ συναγωνιζόμενον, καὶ συμπᾶδον, ἀλλὰ τῶν μὲν περιεργαίων ἀπάντων ἔρημος γένηται, καὶ γυμνός, ἀναγνώσκει δὲ τις αὐτὸν ἀπιδάνας, καὶ μηδὲν ἥδος ἐνσημαινόμενος, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἀπαριθμῶν· εἰκότως οἶμαι φαῦλος εἶναι δοκῶν τοῖς ἀκέουσιν. Nam si Oratoris autoritate & Voce, & Actionis Varietate, in eloquentiæ studiis usitata, destituatur Oratio, atq; etiam occasionibus, & studio gerendæ rei, nihilq; sit quod vires augeat, & ad persuadendum adjuvet, sed cum his omnibus careat, tum verò ineptè, nulloq; cum affectu, ab aliquo recitetur, qui verba quodam modo numeret: eam contemni ab auditoribus quis miretur? Isocr. Orat. ad Phil. p. 172.

of

of Softness and Vehemence in his Voice, which tended at once to convince and ravish the Souls of the Hearers; which, being supported with Gravity and Good Sense, made him reign over his most judicious Auditors, and often made 'em fear he wou'd end too soon. *Because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the People Knowledge,—he sought to find out acceptable Words, and that which was written was upright, even Words of Truth. The Words of the Wise are as Goats, and as Nails fastned by the Masters of Assemblies, which are given from one Shepherd,* Eccles. xii. 9, 10, 11.

His Prayers were as rich as his Sermons. With what Reverence did he speak to the great God! How extraordinary was the Application of his Mind in that Service! How copious his Thoughts, how strong and lively his Expression! 'Tis too late to make a Collection of his Prayers, otherwise they wou'd perhaps be as entertaining and as edifying as a Volume of Sermons. The Variety of 'em wou'd shew that he was confin'd to no set Form.

Never did I see a Man ascend the Pulpit with a more serious Air; the Composure of his Countenance at that Time, when he constantly us'd a short Mental Prayer, shew'd an awful Sense of the great Work that lay before him. I have been often affected with that Sight.

I hope you have not received all this Grace in Vain, but are many of you made wise to Salvation by his Ministry. Sure I am, if any of you miss of Heaven, you can't say, that your *Pastor* never shew'd you the Way.

4. Aged and Faithful Ministers are a Head of Inspection and Care. They oversee and enquire into the State of their own Flock, are ready at all Times to succour them, and dare not commit the keeping of their Souls to others.

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† Ἐπίσκοπος ἀπὸ ἐπί
& σκοπεῖν, quia Episcopi debent vigilare super Grege.

The Name and Nature of his Office obliges a *Scripture Bishop* to immediate Inspection and Superintendency. Faithful Ministers are not Heads without Eyes.

You can all tell what Care your *Pastor* has taken of you, what Pains he has taken with you; how faithfully he has admonish'd you, how affectionately he has pray'd with you, how seriously he has dealt with you by his Reproofs and Warnings.

What Success he has had, you are better able to judge than I am: If what he has already said and done succeed not, you may remain as you are for him, he will now speak to you no more, he will be no more your Reprover. He will no more warn the Defiled and Unclean of their Danger; nor any more alarm the Drunkard; nor trouble the Worldly Man with asking his Charity; His Tongue cleaves to the Roof of his Mouth.

And I may add, you will no more trouble him: For it must have been his Trouble if any of you shou'd have committed Folly and Lewdness in *Israel*: If he had seen, or suspected that any of you were enslav'd by vile Appetites; if, even from Rich Men, he shou'd still have met with unkind Refusals of their Charity, these wou'd have been his Trouble.

These Things chiefly hurt the Guilty, yet they were and wou'd have been unsuitable Returns to him for his Care and Love. But he is got above them, and has left you below to mend. The shadow of Death now rests upon his Eyelids, and he cannot see. No Reports can strike his Ears.

5. Aged Faithful Ministers are an *Exemplary Head*. They are Guides and Leaders to their People and to their younger Brethren by their Lives, as well as by their Doctrine.

Such an Head was *my Father* unto you. Tho' he *shone* in the *Pulpit*, he did not shine *only* there; nor

was

was he like those Physicians, who prescribe large or unpalatable *Doses* of *Physick* to their Patients, but take none themselves. He liv'd the Truths he preach'd; and did not stand as a *Mercury* on the High-Way, that shews Travellers the Road, but keeps its Place while they pass on. But another Illustration may be more agreeable and instructing. As the *Mercuries* plac'd upon the Roads that led to the Cities of Refuge, when two Ways met, had inscrib'd upon 'em *Refuge, Refuge*, so on his Life you might have look'd and read how your selves ought to live.

He did not press on you Humility and Lowliness of Mind with a proud Heart of his own.

He did not recommend Temperance, and go into Excesses himself.

He did not rally against Oppression, and in the mean Time bear hard on the Poor.

He did not beg your Charity to the *Distressed*, to the *Lecture*, for building *Houses of Worship*, and withhold his own.

He did not Preach up the future Heavenly World to you, and all the Time pursue only this World.

He did not put you on to Diligence in your proper Callings, and neglect his own Calling; for to this Work, the Work of the Ministry, and the saving of Souls he gave up all his Strength. He visibly *wore* away in his Work, and did not *rust* away.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

Are aged faithful Ministers our Heads, are they such Heads as I have describ'd?

1. They merit a suitable Degree of Reverence and Love while they live, nor ought they to be forgot when they are dead. We shou'd esteem them as the Chariots and Horsemen of *Israel*; as valuable as Fathers are to a Family; as necessary as Horsemen to a Nation.

Nation: Their Interest in God, their Love to us; their Courage in Duty, their Prevalency in Prayer; are all Grounds of Esteem. Let us then *remember those who have had the Rule over us, who have spoken unto us the Word of God*, Heb. xii. 7.

Your Minister was to you what a Father is to his Children; what an able Horseman is to an Army. And as you lov'd him while he liv'd, now he is dead, I'm persuaded most of you will not forget him. Those of you who look'd on him as an Intercessor with God, one who stood in the Breach between God and Sinners, and kept off by his Prayers divine Wrath, will feel your Loss, and long mourn over your dead *Pastor*. The Removal of a Praying Minister is an awful Stroke.

2. It must be your own Hurt and your own Loss, if you grieve and wound them. If the Head suffer, tho' it be from the Hand or Foot, it can't distribute Spirits and Strength to those unkind and abusive Members as usual, nor act with its wonted Vigour.

The Grievs of Ministers must damp their Spirits, cramp 'em in their Thoughts, Discourses and Prayers, and so return in Mischief upon your selves. Your Part is to guard and defend your Head, and it must be dangerous to your selves to afflict and wound it.

I'm persuaded few Ministers have liv'd amongst their People in more Reputation and Peace; than *my Father* has done amongst you: And, on his Part, I am able to bear my Testimony, that his Concern, living and dying, was for you.

3. Beg of God that you may never want amongst you a faithful Minister, for in those Circumstances you wou'd want a Head; one to watch over you, to go before you, to communicate Life and Vigour to you, one to advise, and give you Counsel in all your Spiritual Concerns. When God has given you a Man, a Minister to be your Head, pray for him as
such.

such. They need your Prayers, for their Work is hard, and often very afflicting.

Other Builders, when they have laid a Foundation and carried up a Building, can leave it and return to it again, and find the Building as they left it. So can the Husbandman plow a Part of his Field one Day, and another Part the next; but 'tis often not thus with Ministers, the Workmen that labour at *God's Building*, and in *God's Husbandry*; If they make some good Impressions on the Minds and Hearts of their Hearers one Day, they seldom meet them in the same Disposition, and under the Force of the same Impressions the next Day; the Cares and Pleasures of this World have undone all, and they have their Work to do over again. The Progress they make is often slow and sometimes undiscernable.

What need then have they of Heavenly Aids, and what need of your Prayers to fetch in those Aids?

2 Thes. iii. 1. *Finally Brethren pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may be glorified, &c.*

4. How friendly shou'd the Ministers of Christ be amongst themselves, how well united? If they who are Heads over their several Flocks, wound each other by bitter censorious Words, or unkind Actions, they do Hurt to innumerable others, even to every Member of those Flocks, whose Shepherd is smitten, and whose Head is griev'd. The *Servant of the Lord* shou'd not strive, but be gentle to all, and in particular to each other.

II. The Time is coming when God will remove his aged Ministers from their Charges. When they shall be remov'd from their Families, their Flocks and their Neighbouring Ministers, those who love and value 'em most.

'Tis well that Jesus Christ the Head of the Church is also the God and Governour of the World, and of every Event in it; in Regard the Deaths of Mini-

sters, their Removal from World to World, and their Removal from one Station to another in this World must then be under his Care, both as Head of the World and of the Church.

Now we may suppose that this Dispensation, the Death of faithful Ministers has these Foundations or Reasons to Support it.

1. That 'tis the Pleasure of Jesus Christ now and then to shift Hands. This he doth not only for his own Glory, that it may appear he can qualify others, when some are gone, for *with him is the Residue of the Spirit*. But also for the Good of Souls, that they who are left ungathered by one Minister may be gathered by another.

But may I not ask, Who shall come after your last *Pastor*, and convert those whom he has left unconverted? Who can do more than he has done? I can assure thee who art left in thy Sins after such a Minister is dead, thy Danger is extremely great.

Yet it must be own'd divine Grace is inexhaustible, and another Method may work with some, where former ones have not succeeded. Christ has on purpose put this Treasure of the Gospel into *Earthen Vessels*, that the safety of the Treasure, while the Vessels are broke, and its Prospering, while the Stewards thereof are laid aside, may convince Men that the Excellency of its awakening, persuading, comforting Power is of God and not of Man, 2 Cor. iv. 7.

If God shou'd keep alive the old Ministers, and the Prophets shou'd live for ever, it might be contru'd that his Stock of Gifts and Grace were drain'd: But his qualifying fresh Instruments to succeed the old ones, lets us see that his Fund is yet full. Christ by this Method shews himself to be the Fountain of all Gifts and Grace, and of all Success too; for tho' Ministers die, the Gospel lives, and the Work of Souls goes on; *All Flesh is as Grass, and all the Glory of Man, as the Flower of Grass. The Grass withereth,*
and

and the Flower thereof falleth away: but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever, 1 Pet. i. 24, 25. When one Minister has done all he can, 'tis fit that another shou'd come in his Room. Thus more Souls are gathered, and more Men come upon their Trial.

2. 'Tis of great Service to Ministers themselves that they must die. They being but Men need to die as well as other Men, that the Foresight of Death may restrain 'em from over-loving this World, and from giving up themselves to a Life of Diversion, to secular Cares or sensual Lusts.

They need to die, that the Prospect of Death may make 'em serious, and over-awe all their Ministrations, that nothing of Air and Levity may ever overtake 'em. A Sense of God and Death will give the Spirits and Hearts of Ministers a just Concern. That sacred Reverence, before-mention'd, with which your *Pastor* always went into the Pulpit, and address'd God and Souls, was apt to diffuse an Air of Gravity over the whole Assembly.

Ministers need to die, that the Approach of Death may give Spirit and Life to their Endeavours, make them work while they have the Day, and cause them to use all Diligence in gathering Souls and preparing their Accounts.

Finally, Ministers need to die, that they may not too long be kept from their Rewards. When a Day-Labourer has done his Days-Work, he wou'd be at Rest: When he has accomplish'd his Warfare, he wou'd be Crown'd. And 'tis a Pleasure to a wise and thinking People when they part with their Minister to know, and to be able to say, That he has done his Work, and done it well; that he has been faithful in his Stewardship, has acted his Part honourably, and is gone off with Glory.

This may be your Refreshment; you may speak with Courage, and talk with Delight of your deceased *Pastor*: His *Doctrine* and *Manner of Life*, you

may stand by and defend ; for he has fought a good Fight, he has kept the Faith, and is gone to his Rest and his Reward. The subject of Corruption lieth with us, we may go to his Grave and weep ; but his Spirit, the Subject of Grace and Sanctification, is gone above. He, like a *Shock of Corn fully ripe*, is gather'd in, while we stand as unripe Fruit, and have need to beg more Time and Means.

3. 'Tis a Disposition that a People may not only acquiesce in, but reap Benefit from, that their Ministers, their most faithful ones die. The Expectation of their Removal is a proper Means to excite and awake Careless Hearers, to attend and improve their Ministrations while they are with 'em. 'Twill cause them to hear as those who must shortly hear 'em no more.

Moreover, the Deaths of Ministers may bring People to mourn over their own Sins ; may cure the Divisions that subsist amongst 'em ; may keep them from depending too much on Man ; and may create fresh Appetites ; for many are of that Temper, they wou'd not have one Minister over-long ; Immortal Preachers wou'd not please them.

I shall only add, 'Tis no doubt the Purpose of Jesus Christ to lead a People's Thoughts and Hopes up to Heaven, by the Deaths of their Ministers, as he has been long doing by their Labours and their Lives. And one wou'd think, if no other Motive shou'd succeed to disengage our Affections from this World, and to direct them towards a better, this wou'd do it, that good Men are apace gathering thither.

I M P R O V E M E N T.

Must aged faithful Ministers be taken from us ?

1. Let us be deriving that Assistance from them while we have them, that we may be better able to shift without 'em ; and when they are gone not be left wholly Comfortless, wholly Graceless.

Now

Now your *Pastor* is dead, if his Works and Labours, his Words and Sayings, his Life and Pattern live within you, this will be your Relief: But if he be gone and has left thee in thy Sins, if he has left thee a Drunkard, a vain, proud Creature, an empty Professor, a hallow Boaster, a Worldling, a hard-hearted Wretch, a careless Liver, I know not what will become of thee, nor can I tell how to speak Peace or Comfort to thee.

2. Let us endeavour to secure an Interest in the Grace and Favour of Christ our ever living Head. Tho' we may say of our Fathers, *Where are they?* and of the Prophets, *Do they live for ever?* Zech. i. 5. yet of Christ 'tis said, *He abideth ever, and hath an unchangeable Priesthood*, Heb. vii. 24. And because he lives, the Gospel Ministry shall live, tho' they who minister in it die.

We all know that our nearest Relations and dearest Friends will be shortly taken from us, then blessed is he who has made the Lord his Trust. Cease from Man, and go to Christ your ever-living, your everlasting Head.

3. Let us expect to die, and prepare to die, since we see our Heads and Leaders die before us. Your *Pastor* has shown you the Way both to live well, and to die well; follow him, and you will not miscarry; go after him in Life, and you will go to him at Death. Death to a good Man is like the Wagons that came for *Jacob*. Death's Errand to such is only to fetch 'em Home to Christ, and the near Prospect of it shou'd *revive* 'em.

III. When aged faithful Ministers are remov'd by Death, they are taken from the Head of their Charges, and all who have been under their Care ought to look on themselves as depriv'd of their Head.

For my own Part, I expect to feel it more than I yet do, that I am without my Head; that *my Father* is lifted from my Head. I believe many of my Bre-

thren will join with me in their Complaint: Nor are you, I'm persuaded, insensible of your Loss. You have lost a Father, a Friend, an Intercessor. One that watch'd for your Souls, as expecting to give an Account of himself to God: One that long'd after you all.

And how great was his Love to young Ministers, how engaging and almost excessive his Candour; how welcome did he make 'em to his Pulpit, his Conversation, and his Table! How ready was he to observe the Excellencies of their Sermons, and how kindly did he pass over the weak Parts without any Notice!

Tho' his Abilities for the Pulpit set him above many of his Brethren, yet he always spoke and acted amongst 'em with Affection and Modesty. 'Twas his Friendliness and Humility that charm'd, and made him dear to those who cou'd not be so well pleas'd with equal or superiour Parts, where these moral Excellencies were wanting.

The IMPROVEMENT.

When an aged faithful Minister dies, are younger Ministers and People depriv'd of their Head?

1. Surviving Ministers ought hence to be awak'd to greater Seriousness, Zeal and Diligence, which will abate the Church's Loss sustain'd by such a Stroke. The saying of a General to his Men is applicable on this Occasion, As he was consulting with one of his Officers concerning the Disposition of a Battle, that was resolv'd upon, a Cannon Ball comes, while they were talking together, and dashes to Pieces the Head of the Officer, as he stood by his General's Side; upon which, with an undaunted Mind, he turns to those behind him and says, "Lord have Mercy upon his Soul, he's kill'd, but come we must go on".

Tho' your Minister be dead, we that are left behind must go on fighting against Satan's Kingdom, and

and not slack our Work : Our Hands are this Day become weak, but God can strengthen them.

2. Tho' a faithful Minister's Death deprives a People of their Head ; yet let them remember 'tis their Felicity and Glory, they had such a Head.

Your *Pastor* was your Glory while he liv'd ; and that he was so, may be your Comfort now he's dead.

What remains is,

(1.) That you remember the Things you have learn'd and have been instructed in, *knowing of whom you have learn'd 'em*, 2 Tim. iii. 14. Think and Talk over his Sermons, his Sayings, his Life ; that the Seed long since Sown may rise up in new and abundant Fruits in your Conversation, that you may at length arrive at Heaven, as he has done, full of Grace and Knowledge ; the Rich remains of Light and Goodness shone in him to the last ; may the Light he has convey'd into your Minds and Lives shine more and more unto perfect Day !

Remember his Discourses from the Pulpit : And you who heard 'em, remember his *last Sayings*. 'Twas *my* great Infelicity I heard so few of 'em, but the Necessities of my own Charge prevented me. I was wonderfully pleas'd with one of his Sayings,

“ That the greater Depredations Death makes amongst Mankind, the greater Glory will God have in overcoming Death, and recovering the Ruins of Mankind by a Resurrection ”.

To some Company the next Day he said, “ I am going the Way of all the Earth, but I trust, thro' the infinite Mercy of God, and the Merits of Christ the Mediator of the new Covenant, that my Spirit is going the Way of all Saints ”. He added, “ Tho' Ministers die, the Gospel Ministry lives, because Christ is a Priest for ever ”.

The Passage that follows, I choose to give you in the Words of my Worthy Friend and Reverend Brother Mr. *Seddon*, who I thought was able to remem-

ber what pass'd more perfectly than I cou'd do. At my Request therefore he thus represents the Matter in a Letter to me.

“ --- With regard to the Passage in your Father's Illness, as nearly as I can recollect, it was thus. Being ask'd by Mr. Aldred, *How he did?* Mr. Bourn answer'd, *My Work is, I think, now near an End.* Mr. Aldred replying, *Then, Sir, your Reward is near.* Your Father, after a little Pause, with an Air and Tone, which I thought, intimated Humility, and also Complacency and Satisfaction, return'd in these Words, *My Reward! 'Tis all his Grace.* After this, Mr. Aldred spoke to this Effect, and as nearly as I can remember, in these Terms; *You are in all probability leaving us behind you for a while in this World, where, you know, we are reproach'd and condemn'd by some for our Dissent from the Way establish'd; what think you, now that you are in near View of the Tribunal of God, of your having acted in the Capacity of a Nonconformist Minister?* Mr. Bourn answer'd, *I have chosen the Way of Truth and Holiness; and if I were to pass thro' Life again, should, if I know my own Heart, act as I have done.*

Such Sayings of your Head are worth laying up: Those who have gathered none from the Lips of their dying Minister, may possibly feel some Reproaches in their own Breast, that they shou'd attend him with no more Concern.

(2.) That you remember what an Example he has set you, and that you walk in his Steps; *Whose Faith follow, considering the End of his Conversation,* Heb. xiii. 7.

Here's an endless Field.

But follow him { 1. In *Humility*.
 { 2. In *Charity*.

1. Let the Image of his Humility be drawn upon your Minds, and Copied out in your Lives. How great or various soever his Excellencies were, he had
low

low Thoughts of 'em, but a quick Sense of other Mens, and was ready to acknowledge them. He was contented with a mean Dwelling, for he liv'd in Expectation of an House from Heaven. He visited the poorest Creatures, and at all Hours. How thankful was he for the meanest Offices of Love in his Sickness, as well as for the smallest Marks of Respect in his Health! When some young Persons came to see him in his Illness, "He thanked 'em they would come to see a poor dying Creature".

Can you be proud under such a Pattern! Can you set your Hearts on the Fineries and Vanities of this World, when your holy Minister so much neglected them!

He was as free from Ambition as from Avarice; from the Love of Esteem and Glory and Dominion, as of Interest: The Love of which are the usual Sources of Divisions among Ministers. Nor was he fond of his own Conceptions; tho' he deliver'd *Things ever so great* in the Pulpit, he let 'em pass, he put no Accent upon 'em, made no Preface to 'em, nor cast an observing Eye upon the Auditory. He was an utter Stranger to the Spirit of Jealousy, which too often attends less Degrees of Pulpit Eloquence than he was Master of.

This Innocency, this Humility made him the Object of Universal Love.

2. Imitate his Charity. I can't number the Particulars of it, nor amongst you need I; many of which were such as cannot be hid; for thro' all his Days he went about doing Good, and neither spar'd his Pains nor his Purse. He was both free of his own, and had an excellent Faculty of begging the Charity of others.* Besides Occasional Acts in the Course of

* Which at length procur'd him the Character of *the best Beggar* in BOLTON.

all his Life, he did for several Years, upon his own Bottom, support a little Charity School, paying for the Teaching of about twenty poor Children. * And I wou'd recommend to you the Continuance of this small Foundation, as far as you shall find there's just Occasion. There wou'd indeed have been less need of this Admonition, if that *Charity-School* which is erected in Town of late had promiscuously admitted the Children of *Dissenters* with others of their own Persuasion, which wou'd have been but a suitable Return for the Kindness their Children have receiv'd from Charitable Distributions among the *Dissenters*. But 'twill be no great Hardship, if a Few of you join in what your *Pastor* did alone. There sit several rich Men here, who without sinking their Stock in Trade, or their Estates may do that singly, which I am moving to be done jointly. And this you may almost promise your selves the Comfort of, and to see its Success; whereas the many Hundreds given to Children don't constantly succeed. And if you find no Occasion for your Charity this Way; you need but open your Eyes to see various other Methods of bestowing it well.

I remember to have met with it in *Eusebius*, " That
 " when *Constantine* was persuading a Rich Man to
 " some Acts of Charity, and cou'd not prevail; with
 " a Rod in his Hand he describes his Grave, and told
 " him that within such a Compass of Ground he
 " wou'd shortly lye, as greedy as he was of Earth
 " now".

Thus 'twill be with us all; and only well spent Time and Wealth will be our Comfort then.

* My Father was encourag'd and assisted in the Beginning, and for some Years during the Progress of this Work, by the Contributions of several Gentlemen in and about *Manchester* and *Bolton*, whose Subscriptions I have by me.

As thro' all his Life your *Pastor* was doing you and all his Neighbours good; to some Giving, to others Lending; So at his Death he has given you a Mark of his Affection, and particularly of his Concern for the Weekly Lecture; having left you a Legacy as large as to any Branch of his Family, whether Children or Grand-Children. *

Go you and do likewise; nor fear your Children's faring any worse for your Charity and Goodness.

IV. 'Tis proper and may be useful for a People, (and for younger Ministers, the Sons of the Prophets) to be thinking and discoursing before-hand on the Removal of their Ministers from their Head.

You cou'd not well do otherwise in your Circumstances, when Providence gave you so fair Notice of your *Pastor's* Removal, and told you clearly that his Departure was at Hand. God gradually weaken'd his Strength in the Way, and so leasurely took him from you, that you might have Time to prepare for such an Event, and might have Opportunity of bidding him your several Farewells. As a Lamp goeth out when the Oil is spent, so died your *Pastor*; the vital Flame *burn'd* out, it was not *blown* out; but he's lighted up in Heaven, where he'll shine for ever.

And as you cou'd not but (with the Sons of the Prophets concerning *Elijah*) talk before-hand of his being lifted up from you; now he is so, I hope your

* Thus I thought it wou'd have prov'd, but upon a Dividend among the several Branches of my Father's Family, who were Legatees, there is about twenty Shillings odds on their Side. The Legacy to the Support of the Lecture is twenty Pounds, the other Shares are about *twenty Guineas*.

Hence it appears, *my Father* propos'd not the enriching Himself and his Family as his great End; that the Moderate Portions he gave his Children, and the small Legacies he left to them were not gather'd out of his People's Allowances. Yet so far was he from mean Shifts to raise his Salary, tho' his People were abundantly able to have done it, that he never appear'd uneasy at his Allowances.

Thoughts

Thoughts and Discourse of him will be continued, and not soon die away. So fruitful a Life as his was, will furnish you with abundant Matter.

But tho' his natural Strength abated for a long Time, yet 'twas the least perceivable in the Pulpit, where his wonted Vigour was wonderfully exerted even in his latter Days. Nay when he went up weak thither, he seem'd to grow strong with his Work, and to forget his Weakness: Yet at last his Strength fail'd, tho' he was far from being weary of his Work, for the Pulpit and his Closet were his Elements, yet he was quite wearied by it. God spar'd him amongst you so long, till the Constitution he had given him was worn out; and by the going off of the Distemper made his Passage into the other World easy to him, when he had done all his Work in this World. He burn'd clear to the last, but when no vital Moisture was left he must go out.

To add no more, 'twas well God remov'd him not in Anger from you; as I hope he did not; if you continue in the Ways of Righteousness, Peace and Holiness, 'twill appear he did not.

'Twas well he left you under the Bonds of the Covenant. One Part of his last Days Work in Publick was to bring you once more to Seal your Covenant with God, and he join'd with you in it. And this was done over the Memorials of your Lord's Death.

Such a Covenant, and Seal'd on such an Occasion, will, I hope, for ever fix you and Christ together.

I M P R O V E M E N T.

1. The Condition of careless Hearers is dark and uncomfortable, who never thought of such a Stroke, never seriously talk'd it over before it came, nor were ready for it; whose Father, and Pastor, and spiritual Friend is gone and they know it not, I mean, are not affected with it, but go on insensible of their Loss.

2. When we see our aged Ministers going off, and have Opportunity of Talking about it, this shou'd dispose

dispose us to prepare for our own Death. If one might choose the Time of Dying, it would be when such a Friend of Christ died, that we might go to Heaven together. *Let us also go, that we may die with him,* John xi. 16. But as he was, so are we at the Disposal of our common Lord, who keeps the Keys of Death and Eternity in his own Hands, and it becomes Christians to be always ready to resign themselves to the Orders from above, in what Manner, or at what Time soever they are sent us. Nor can I mention a better Preparative than Conversing with dying Men, especially dying Ministers about the Invisible World they are going into.

3. Previous Notice of their Ministers Deaths shou'd put on a People to pray, that the Spirit of the Prophets may not retire when the Prophets die. That God would not remove his own Presence and that of his Ministers together; but that he would kindle up one Light before he puts out another; and would animate succeeding Ministers to more Zeal and Diligence, that when their Heads are gone, they may be better able to stand alone.

V. Some Providences are so dark and cloudy, particularly the Removal of Faithful Ministers by Death, that those most concern'd in them, frequently care not to talk of 'em, and desire only to sit down and think 'em over. *I know it, hold you your Peace.*

Methinks 'tis such a Time with us. We talk and weep a while, and then can only give over and think. But we Sorrow most of all that we shall hear his Voice, and see his Face no more.

Well, let us sit down and think, "How is the Gold become dim, the fine Gold changed! How is the Glory departed from our Pulpit! The Glory of our Town is gone". As

Mr. *HOWE* says of *Manchester*, when Mr. *Newcome* was gone, so may I say of *Bolton*, "Ah, *Bolton*, *Bolton*, that ancient

Fun. Sermon for Mr. *Newcome*. Pref.

fam'd

" fam'd Seat of Religion and Profession ! May Ca-
 " pernann's Doom never be thine, may thy Levers,
 " thy Seddon, thy last deceased Pastor, thy own and
 " thy Neighbouring Ministers never be called up to
 " witness against thee, they are dead, but the Word
 " they have preach'd will never die ".

I may add, " Ah Bolton ! how wou'd thy Men ga-
 " ther together and weep, were they sensible of their
 " Loss, and did they know what a Man was dead ".
 But I wou'd not aggravate your Sorrows, I believe
 'em to be truly great ; and as the Painter *Timanthes*,
 that was to draw the confus'd Lamentations of *Aga-*
meunon (the same with the Scripture *Jephthah*) for
 the Sacrifice of his Daughter, drew a Veil over that
 which did transcend the Skill of his Pencil ; so I will
 rather veil than either encrease or expose your Griefs.

But if Holy Men, and pious Matrons will weep,
 Hear your Pastor's Voice from above, saying, " Weep
 " not for me, Daughters of *Jerusalem*, I am in the
 " Joy of my Lord, reaping what I have sowed upon
 " Earth, partaking of a Reward infinitely transcend-
 " ing my poor Labours with you : Weep then only
 " for your selves, that you are so far behind, and let
 " your future Care be to come after me, that I and
 " You may rejoyce together in the Day of Christ,
 " that neither You nor I have run in vain, or labour-
 " ed in vain ".

I will conclude with the Words which I am told,
 were the last my Father spoke to the World, from *Heb.*
xiii. 20, 21. Now the God of Peace that brought again
 from the Dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of
 the Sheep, thro the Blood of the everlasting Covenant,
 make you perfect in every good Work to do his Will,
 working in you that which is well pleasing in his Sight,
 thro Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory for ever and ever.
 Amen.

F I N I S.



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